(d) whether Government are considering liberal incentives for products which substitute use of forest woods; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(e) what incentives are at present given for the efforts to increase forest area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) According to a survey carried out by the National Remote Sensing Agency using satellite imagery the rate of depletion of forest cover during the period 1972—75 to 1980—82 was about 1.3 million hectares per year. No survey has been done to specifically assess destruction of forest every year in terms of number and volume of trees.

(b) The annual timber harvest from the forests is estimated to be 13.5 million cubic metres. The recorded annual production of fuelwood from the forests is around 15 million tonnes.

(c) A sum of approximately Rs. 650 crores would be required every year for afforesting an area of 1.3 million hectares.

(d) Yes, Sir. The Central Government are giving financial incentives for setting up of biogas plants, purchase of solar cookers and improved wood burning stoves to reduce consumption of wood. The Government have also provided 100% equity for setting up a corrugated fibre board carton plant for manufacture of fruit packing cases in Himachal Pradesh.

The Central Government have given fiscal incentives in indirect taxes through concessional rates of excise duty on specified varieties of paper manufactured out of agricultural wastes and non-conventional raw materials. Excise duty has been fully exempted in kraft paper and paper board used in the manufactures of corrugated fibreboard cartons for packing apples. The government have exempted wood pulp from import duty and concessional rate of 10% basic custom duty has been prescribed for the imported wood subject to certain specifications.

(e) The incentives are given in form of subsidised seedling distribution. Some of the states are giving cash incentives for surviving seedling and reimbursement of the cost of tree planting in case of rural poor. People's participation is being encouraged through the schemes of tree patta, decentralised people's nurseries and grant-in-aid to voluntary agencies.

National awards

2842. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the norms for recommending to the President of India for the awards of honour like Padmashree to Bharat Ratna;

(b) whether Government have set up any Committee for this purpose; if so, what are the names of the members of the Committee; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that Hemant Kumar refused to accept the honour of Padmashree this year and also the names of the others who have refused the honour this year?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) to (c) Bharat Ratna is conferred by the President for exceptional services towards the advancement of Art, Literautre and Science, and in recognition of public service of the highest order. Padma Awards, i.e.

Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri are conferred by the President in recognition of exceptional and distinguished service; distinguished service of a high order; and distinguished service, respectively, renedered by an individual in any field, e.g. Art, Literature, Science, Technology, Education, Public Life, Sports and Public Services etc.

Keeping with the high traditions and dignity of the Awards, it would not be in public interest to disclose the manner of selection, the procedure adopted etc., in relation to Padma Series of Awards.

Shri Hemanta Kumar, as reported in a section of the Press, declined the offer of the Government to honour him with 'Padma Shri' this year. It will not be in the public interest to disclose whether any other person had shown his disinclination in accepting the award.

Standing Committee to look after preservation and transplantation of trees in the Union Territory of Delhi

2843. SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI:
SHRI SOHAN LAL DHUSIYA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Standing Committee has been constituted by the Lt. Governor of the Union Territory of Delhi to look after preservation, transplantation and fresh plantation of trees; if so, when it was constituted;

(b) what is the composition of the Committee and the number of public representatives from various colonies of Delhi nominated as Members in this Committee and the powers delegated and facilities/ amenities provided to them;

(c) what is the number of meetings held by the Committee so far alongwith the date of meetings and how the selection of its members is being done and what is the tenure of their membership in the said committee;

(d) whether Government have issued any guidelines with regard to plantation of trees when a tree is felled; and

(e) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) Yes, Sir, on 21.7.1981.

(b) Statement-I is given. (*See* below.)

(c) Thirty three meetings of the Committee have been held so far. The dates of the meetings are given at Statement-II. (*See* below). The Officers of various organisations/departments are represented in the Committee. As nominations are made by designation, Tenure is not specified.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Statement-I

No public representative of colonies of Delhi has been nominated as member in this committee. No powers are delegated to the committee. No amenities are provided to committee. However, following are the terms of the reference of the committee:—

(i) To advise the L.G. on all matters relating to felling of trees on the request of private individuals or in connection with the projects of Govt. Deptt., Local bodies or any other authority.

(ii) To recommend measures for the transplantation of fresh plantation of trees. Wherever felling of trees become unavoidable in public interest.